

opposite—I mean, by those simple Italian operatic airs which, in spite of all their monotony of rhythm and childishness of harmony, seem at times to sing to us like the very soul of music. Admit this or not as you please, you Pharisees of good taste, it is so, and it is my present task to propound the riddle that it is so, and to nibble a little myself at the solution.—In childhood's days we tasted the honey of many things for the first time. Never was honey so good as then ; it seduced us to life, into abundant life, in the guise of the first spring, the first flower, the first butterfly, the first friendship. Then—perhaps in our ninth year or so—we heard our first music, and this was the first that we understood; thus the simplest and most childish tunes, that were not much more than a sequel to the nurse's lullaby and the strolling fiddler's tune, were our first experience. (For even the most trifling " revelations " of art need preparation and study; there is no " immediate " effect of art, whatever charming fables the philosophers may tell.) Our sensation on hearing these Italian airs is associated with those first musical raptures, the strongest of our lives. The bliss of childhood and its flight, the feeling that our most precious possession can never be brought back, all this moves the chords of the soul more strongly than the most serious and profound music can move them.—This mingling of aesthetic pleasure with moral pain, which nowadays it is customary to call (rather too haughtily, I think) " sentimentality"^{3J}—it is the mood of Faust at the end of the first scene—this " sentimentality " of the listener is all to the advantage of Italian music. It is a feeling which the ex-